

May 2, 2001

Services Act with my colleague, Mr. CARDIN of Maryland. I would first like to thank Mr. CARDIN for taking the initiative on this issue and continually bringing this bill to Congress's attention.

This important legislation is an effort to allow medical professionals to make decisions in the emergency room, not the insurance company bureaucrats.

Insurance companies reportedly have refused to pay emergency room bills when patients did not obtain prior authorization for emergency treatment. It is inappropriate and dangerous for insurance companies to require pre-authorization for emergency services. Indeed, emergency conditions are by definition problems that require immediate medical attention without delay.

Patients are also being financially punished for taking precautionary action and admitting themselves to the emergency room for a critical situation. We should not attach a high personal risk to seeking out emergency care. I have heard many stories of individuals who go to the emergency room with symptoms that indicate a serious illness, perhaps a heart attack. They undergo a battery of tests and find out that the heart attack was something else, perhaps a bad case of heartburn. That should be good news. However, weeks later they find out that those tests cost hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars, and their insurance companies refuse to pay.

This legislation will put an end to bottom-line medicine and keep insurance companies out of the emergency room. Decisions on the medical treatment of the ill and injured should be placed back in the hands trained to save lives, not dollars. The Access to Emergency Medical Services Act of 2001 would require insurers to pay for emergency room visits based on a "prudent layperson" definition of an emergency and a patient's symptoms, rather than the final diagnosis. An individual seeking medical attention for what they "prudently" determine to be a medical emergency should not be penalized for that decision. This bill would also prohibit insurance companies' pre-authorization requirements for emergency care. Finally, the bill requires that health care plans and emergency physicians work jointly to coordinate follow-up care.

This bill does not replace the need for comprehensive health insurance reform. The initiatives proposed by Congressmen GANSKE and DINGELL are essential for a broad reform of our health insurance system. That being said, this is a necessary bill to pass to protect citizens from physical injury caused by paperwork delays from their insurance carriers.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important legislation which ensures that an insurance company's response will not make the difference between life and death in the emergency room.

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. ED WILLIS AND HIS SERVICE TO R.B. WRIGHT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to Mr. Ed Willis who is retiring as principal of R.B. Wright Elementary School.

The warm and caring manner in which Ed led the school let every student know that they were special and loved. Ed is the consummate educator because he lets his teachers teach and supports them in their efforts. His students always achieve the maximum of their ability.

Ed is the epitome of the caring, professional administrator. His goal has always been to develop the total child: academically, socially, physically, and culturally. He commands excellence from himself and his staff, and his rewards come in seeing his students succeed.

Ed's life is an example of Christian living. He has been a teacher, coach, father, principal, husband, son, and devoted friend. He has given of himself to this community, making it a better place to live, by loving young children who have attended his school. His calm pleasant demeanor and enthusiasm for his job were often conveyed to his faculty and students. He recognized them for their large as well as their small accomplishments in a genuine effort to encourage them to grow as citizens, not only while at R.B. Wright, but in the community-at-large.

Ed has lived according to John Wesley's rule:

Do all the good you can  
To all the people you can  
In all the ways you can  
At all the times you can  
To all the people you can  
As long as you ever can

Ed exemplifies strong character, leadership and compassion. Through his leadership he is shaping children's ideas about themselves, the country, and the world. He has nourished their appetite for learning. They are developing habits and values that will last them a lifetime.

Ed always shows that he believes intellect and character go hand-in-hand. His optimism and excitement is shared with all those associated with R.B. Wright Elementary School. Ed is a fine diplomat. He is understanding and patient. He sets high standards for the young people who have attended R.B. Wright Elementary School. He is an excellent teacher and administrator, as well as a fine Christian family man.

He is a spectacular example for children, calling every child by name and always greeting them with a smile. Ed is a thoughtful, encouraging, and compassionate principal who is very successful and loved. He is an effective leader, friend, and excellent role model. He ran a tight ship at R.B. Wright Elementary School and will be greatly missed.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE ASTHMA ACT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ASTHMA AWARENESS DAY

### HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to introduce this legislation on the day of the fourth annual Capitol Hill Asthma Awareness Day, and I particularly want to recognize Nancy Sander and the other hard-working members of the Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, whose dedication to fighting asthma is limitless.

Last year, I visited a school in my district in Queens and met an extraordinary young person named Paige Eastwood. At 11 years old, Paige struggles daily to manage her asthma. Yet, as we all know, Paige is not alone. Approximately 15 to 17 million Americans have asthma, over 5 million of whom, like Paige, are children. The burden of asthma on our nation is nothing short of a crisis.

Though many Americans may think of asthma as merely an inconvenience or impediment, it is a serious condition that should not be underestimated. In New York, for example, asthma is the single largest cause of absenteeism in schools, and it accounts for 10 million missed school days annually across the nation. Each year, asthma results in more than 450,000 hospitalizations, in fact while hospitalization rates for other diseases are diminishing, they are climbing for asthma. Asthma also kills with unexpected swiftness. Often, the time from first symptom to final breath can be as little as 30 minutes. And this is happening to children in increasing numbers—since 1980, death rates for children due to asthma have climbed 133 percent.

There is no cure for asthma, and for reasons that we don't fully understand, asthma rates have risen dramatically over the last 20 years. That's why we must give researchers the tools they need to study this debilitating condition. We must give public health officials and community organizations the resources they need to spread the word about how it can be prevented and controlled. And with an epidemic like this, we must also engage schools in helping children with asthma more effectively manage their condition. Our schools not only need support to train teachers and students in how to effectively respond to asthma, but they also desperately need funding to purchase medical equipment and improve indoor air quality.

That's why I reintroduced a bipartisan, comprehensive bill to address the asthma epidemic in our country. My bill will encourage states to establish pediatric asthma action plans, create a National Asthma Coordinating Committee to improve our nationwide response, and bolster public awareness and education efforts through the CDC. It will also provide \$4 million per year directly to low-income schools hardest hit by asthma to implement asthma programs.

Asthma is an indiscriminate disease that strikes Americans of all ages, races, and places. And Congress can and should do more to alleviate the burden of asthma. So

today, as we begin Asthma Awareness Month, I urge my colleagues in Congress to join me in helping our country cope with this serious condition. When children are well enough to go to school, when parents learn how to ward off attacks, when scientists better understand asthma's causes, we can all breathe easier.

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL  
CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK

SPEECH OF

**HON. JIM DeMINT**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 1, 2001*

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, Americans are united around a common goal to help every child in America to receive a world class education. It is a goal that should unite this legislative body around successful education policies—ideas that respond to parents, empower teachers, and educate children.

As we work to improve America's education, let's not lose focus on what is working—such as the tremendous growth and proven success of America's charter schools.

Charter schools prosper because they bind parents, teachers, community and state leaders together to tailor an education program that fits the needs of local students. They prosper because they unleash the intelligence and innovation of our students.

Earlier this year, in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education, I hosted a Public Charter School Summit in Greenville, South Carolina. The summit's purpose was simple: educate and excite local leaders about the potential of charter schools in South Carolina.

We told them that charter schools are public schools that are free from many state and local requirements. In exchange for this freedom and flexibility to try new approaches in education, the school must deliver results in student achievement. It is a contract with the governing board—flexibility in exchange for proven academic results.

By drawing upon the ideas and energy of local and state leaders, South Carolina and other states can turn the education corner. That is how strongly I believe in the transforming ability of charter schools.

We owe our best effort to improve the schools of our state. I am proud of the charter schools which have opened in South Carolina. They have banded together to form the South Carolina Charter School Association, an organization that has helped charter schools not only survive, but flourish in South Carolina. I commend our state's efforts to lift hurdles in the current charter school law and move to make South Carolina a charter-friendly state.

The education of our children is a public trust which we must not take lightly. Like many other aspects of our culture and society, there are principles that stand the test of time. But we need to boldly explore creative solutions that allow our nation's institutions to fit the needs and demands of modern times. Our students deserve a top-notch, cutting-edge education system.

Charter schools are supported by leaders of both parties and of all political learnings. It is

hard to dispute the results when competition, education flexibility, and community partnerships are offered to America's schools.

Mr. Speaker, in the midst of all our debates over ways to improve America's schools, I ask that we pause and give special attention and recognition to the work of charter schools all across the nation. Thousands of parents, teachers, community leaders, and students are providing each day that schools will succeed when education dollars and decisions are kept close to the community.

TRIBUTE TO THE KANSAS CITY  
RAILWAY AND THE GATEWAY &  
WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

**HON. KAREN McCARTHY**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 2, 2001*

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to both the Kansas City Southern Railway and the Gateway & Western Railway Company. These two rail companies are the recipients of the 2001 E.H. Harriman Gold Award, the highest award for railroad employee safety in the rail industry.

At the core of both of these companies is an unwavering commitment to safety, so it is fitting that they were chosen as recipients of the E.H. Harriman Gold Award. The late Mrs. Mary W. Harriman in memory of her husband, Edward H. Harriman, a pioneer in American railroading, founded these annual rail employee safety awards in 1913. Chosen by a committee of transportation professionals, the awards are granted to railroads on the basis of the lowest casualty rate per 200,000 employee hours worked. This formula takes into account the volume of work performed, as well as the number of fatalities, injuries and occupational illnesses confirmed by the Federal Railroad Administration.

The Kansas City Southern Railway Company is a Class I rail system, which operates over 2,728 track miles in 11 central and southeastern states. It was founded in 1887 with the vision of providing the most direct salt water access from the Midwest. Today Kansas City Southern has the shortest route between Kansas City and the Gulf of Mexico, serving the ports of Port Arthur, Texas, New Orleans and West Lake Charles, Louisiana, and Gulfport, Mississippi. Their commitment to safety, along with innovative business practices, makes Kansas City Southern a leader in the rail industry. Their vision of safety encompasses the wellbeing of every employee.

Thriving on the vision and principles of its parent company, Kansas City Southern, Gateway Western Rail is also a formidable force in the rail industry. As one of only four rail gateways along the Mississippi River system in St. Louis, Gateway serves as a major interchange point between eastern and western railroads. It interchanges traffic with every major rail carrier in the United States and has access to the Mississippi River via two barge terminals. Since its inception in 1990, Gateway Western has enjoyed a steady increase in business volume and an outstanding record of safety.

Kansas City Southern Railway and Gateway & Western believe in the necessity of safe

worker conditions in saving lives. They cultivate an environment where employees look out for one another and actively participate in improving the safety of all workers, and an environment where employees are jointly responsible for the safety process. Kansas City Southern Railway and Gateway & Western Railway Companies are dedicated to uncompromising safety in meeting the needs of their customers, their employees, and the communities they serve.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating Kansas City Southern and Gateway & Western Railway Companies on receiving the Harriman Gold Award. Their commitment to putting safety first in the railroad industry serves as a national model.

EDWARD J. SANTOS MEMORIAL  
DEDICATION

**HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 2, 2001*

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled today to honor an inspiring American. Edward J. Santos, a native of Lowell, Massachusetts will be honored Sunday, May 6, 2001, at a Memorial Dedication, in his hometown at Hosford Square.

Edward Santos was a true American hero. He served his nation and cared for his loved ones as a war veteran, dedicated public servant, an active member of his community and family patriarch.

As a Sergeant in the United States Army, Ed served from July 7, 1942, to December 2, 1945. During his wartime service Ed earned the Combat Infantryman, Badge, Bronze Star Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European African Middle Eastern Theater Campaign Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Army Occupational of Germany Medal.

Ed was a very active member of his community, playing a major roll in Lowell politics for more than 40 years. He was a Past Commander of VFW Post 662, a member of the Portuguese American Veterans, Lowell Lodge of Elks, Lowell Veterans Council, Portuguese American Civic League, Portuguese American Center, Holy Ghost Society, National Association of Letter Carriers, Lowell License Commission and a Trustee of the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. He was beloved by the membership of St. Anthony's parish where he was a member of the Holy Name Society.

Since his passing, Ed has been deeply missed by his friends and family including sons Ron, Edward Jr., James and Thomas. Ed and his lovely wife Pauline were the proud grandparents of thirteen wonderful grandchildren.

I am proud to call Edward J. Santos my friend as are the hundreds of lives he touched throughout his exceptional life.